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ABSTRACT

This document focuses on the factors surrounding the selection of superintendents of schools in New York State. Using responses from practicing superintendents, the structures and processes used to recruit these individuals are analyzed. Superintendents in 661 local school districts in New York State were surveyed in February 1988. Findings focused on the following variables: (1) background information concerning school districts; (2) background information concerning superintendents; (3) selection process for positions; (4) approaches to selection process; (5) attitudes toward selection process; (6) reasons for taking positions; and (7) other information. The data showed that approaches of individual districts vary according to levels of consultant participation. The superintendents said the major reason for accepting their current positions was the specific characteristics of the employing district. The pattern of responses to the survey demonstrated that participating superintendents felt strongly that the local board of education should play an active role in the selection of school executives. Information collected in the survey also indicated that boards of education should become more involved in the recruitment of superintendents of schools on a statewide basis. Thirty-three data tables are appended. (18 references). (SI)

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A STUDY OF THE SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE: OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

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Introduction

During the past century, the position of the superintendent of schools has become an institution in the United States. As chief executive officer of that cornerstone of American education, the local school district, the superintendent has come to occupy an influential and sensitive position in numerous communities. Because of these circumstances, the selection of individuals for this position has become an important and complicated endeavor. To a large extent, the directions of education during the remainder of the twentieth century will be shaped by the structures and activities that presently comprise the process of superintendent selection.

American school districts provide a diverse range of environments for superintendency and for the selection of educational leaders. They include small, rural systems with fewer than 500 students; large urban and suburban districts with more than 10,000 students; and a range of schools with a variety of other enrollments and demographic settings. These districts are generally supported by combinations of local and state financing, ranging from less than $1,000,000 to more than $50,000,000 annually. In many areas of the nation, the degree of local control of school districts varies, especially with respect to units of state government.[1]

Currently, the most important influences on the selection of superintendents of schools have been related to the notable attributes of present occupants of these positions. Most notably, superintendency has been characterized as a graying profession. It has been estimated that between 50 and 75 percent of all superintendents of schools in the United States will retire between 1988 and 1992. In some areas of the nation, the rate of retirement exceeds 85 percent by 1992.[2] Studies in some areas of the nation have also suggested that tenure of service of superintendents is becoming shorter, perhaps as a result of increased on-the-job pressures or of greater focus on personal careers.[3] Discussion of the selection process has also concerned the accessibility of superintendency to women. It has been emphasized that 96 percent of superintendents in the United States are men.[4] However, studies of the actual selection process have failed to identify gender bias.[5] Perhaps most importantly, the selection of school leaders is influenced by motivations of individuals who seek these positions. Available literature suggests that potential superintendents are interested in education and desire a variety of administrative challenges. [6]

Within the background of local school districts and the current professional leadership, the selection of school superintendents occurs through defined structures and

processes. Research concerning the mechanics of the selection process is not extensive. Available literature suggests that boards of education, like corporate boards of directors, are frequently ill-prepared to recruit leaders in a systematic and effective manner.[7] Most authorities on this subject agree on the need for extensive planning of the executive search. They recommend that school needs be defined and that job descriptions be developed to address these needs. They frequently suggest that positions be advertised and that lists of candidates be narrowed through interviews and other techniques.[8] Some authors have proposed that techniques employed in industry such as critical path hiring be implemented in school districts.[9]

An issue which appears to be of increasing importance in the selection of school superintendents is the role of recruitment consultants. Historically, many local school districts carried out the selection process without outside assistance. As the complexity of school leadership and recruitment increased, some districts obtained the assistance of outside consultants for this process. The earliest such consultants were university professors, preferred by some districts because they had no direct interest in the outcome of the selection process. Eventually, specialized consulting firms emerged to provide assistance to boards of education in the recruitment of superintendents. In some areas of the nation, intermediate school district superintendents appointed by state government have also become involved in the selection of executives for local districts. This involvement has been criticized since it creates a major challenge to local control of education.[10] From a general standpoint, available literature suggests that the role of consultants in the selection of local school executives is now considerable.[11]

Despite the importance of the selection of superintendents of schools, research concerning the structures and processes of this activity in local districts has not been extensive. One of the largest surveys, conducted in Ohio during the 1986-1987 school year, included data from 72 districts. Information for the study was collected from board of education presidents. Data from the survey indicated that most responding districts advertised vacant superintendencies with the State administrators and school boards associations, however, less than half of the respondents conducted statewide or regional searches. The average number of candidates selected for interviews was six. Among characteristics required by boards of education for superintendencies, respondents ranked public relations skills first, followed by communication skills, and personnel management expertise.[12] In another survey of factors used by school boards in the selection of school superintendents, responses were obtained from 59 local districts in Missouri during the

1984-1985 academic year. Participants placed the highest emphasis on communication skills, followed by knowledge and experience in previous positions.[13]

Other recent literature concerning the selection of superintendents of schools has concerned the process from the viewpoint of the applicant. Most of this literature consists of advice for aspiring candidates. Much of this information concerns job search techniques and methods of preparing for interviews.[14] These materials generally place major emphasis on organization and projection of a winning image.[15] Reflecting the current importance of consultants, some of the published literature provides advice concerning how aspiring candidates can impress these individuals and organizations.[16]

Unfortunately, the literature concerning superintendent selection from the point of view of the candidate, or of the practicing superintendent, is not based on research. It does not survey the methods by which successful candidates prepare for the selection process. It does not identify major sources of assistance or major obstacles in the effort. The literature does not identify opinions and preferences of candidates regarding the selection process or reasons of candidates for accepting particular positions.

This study focused on factors surrounding the selection of superintendents of schools in New York State during the 1987-1988 school year. Using responses from practicing superintendents, it analyzed the structures and processes used to recruit these individuals.

Method

The study focused on a number of variables related to the selection of superintendents of schools in New York State. Variables employed in the study were identified in available literature and are summarized below.

A. Background Information Concerning School Districts
(Enrollment, Demographics, Annual Budget, Independent/Dependent Status)

B. Background Information Concerning Superintendents
(Age, Highest Degree, Year of Highest Degree, Years in Education, Years in Superintendency, Years in Present Superintendency, Sex, Reasons for Becoming Superintendent, Future Plans)

C. Selection Process for Positions
(Method of Selection, Number of Candidates Applying, Number of Candidates Interviewed, Rounds of Interview Conducted, Techniques Used to Narrow List, Length of Process)

D. Approaches to Selection Process

(Reasons for Changing Jobs, Sources of Information Concerning Vacancy, Background Check on District, Applications for Other Positions, Largest Source of Assistance in Obtaining Position, Role of Professional Associations, Role of University Training, Most Useful Aspect of Career in Obtaining Position, Conflicts Arising in Job Search)

E. Attitudes Toward Selection Processes
(Fairness, Preference Regarding Type of Process)

F. Reasons for Taking Positions

G. Other Information

On the basis of available literature and current professional experience, survey questions were developed concerning each of these variables. The resulting set of 34 questions were included in a survey form that could be mailed to superintendents of schools.

By focusing on current superintendents of schools, the sample included only those who had applied for positions and were successful. The sample probably also included practicing superintendents who had applied for other positions and were un successful. It was not possible to identify and sample the opinions of persons who had applied for positions as superintendents but were unsuccessful.

The survey forms were mailed to superintendents of schools in 661 local school districts in New York State during February 1988. Forms were sent to all public school districts in the State except districts located in the five boroughs of New York City and Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) districts, regional units operated by the State Education Department. During April 1988, a follow-up mailing, including the same survey form contained in the original, was mailed. A total of 514 responses to the survey, or 77.8 percent of the total, were received.

Analysis of the data focused on the variables identified above. Distributions of responses by frequency and percent of total were obtained for each variable. For quantitative variables, mean values were also obtained.

Results

Analysis of the study data focused on background information concerning school districts, background information concerning superintendents, the selection process for current positions, approaches of superintendents to the selection process, attitudes of

superintendents toward the selection process, and reasons of superintendents for taking positions. In each of these areas, the analysis was based on tabular data included in the appendix at the end of this narrative.

Background Information Concerning School Districts

Data concerning the school districts in New York State which responded to the survey are summarized in Tables 1-4 of the appendix. This information demonstrated the diversity of participating school systems.

Many responding districts had relatively small enrollments. The data in Table 1 indicated that approximately half included no more than 1,500 students. Less than 10 percent of responding districts (44) had enrollments greater than 5,000 students. Most of the districts had enrollments between 1,000 and 5,000 students, with the mean of slightly over 2,600 falling in this range.

The participating school systems also spanned a range of demographic settings. The data in Table 2 indicated that a slight majority (56 percent) of these districts were in rural areas, however, suburbs, small cities, and urban areas were also represented in the sample. These data suggested that most of the districts with small enrollments identified in Table 1 were in rural locations.

The analysis also indicated that responding school systems were supported by a considerable range of operating budgets. Most of the participating districts (58.07 percent) had annual budgets between $4,000,000 and $20,000,000. The mean budget level was $14,769,131.97. However, the range of data also included 98 districts with annual budgets below $4,000,000 and 110 districts with annual budgets in excess of $20,000,000.

The survey data also indicated that the distribution of responding school districts varied with respect to authority over superintendent selection. The information in Table 4 indicated that participants were equally divided between independent districts, whose selections are not subject to review by State-appointed district superintendents, and dependent districts, whose selections are subject to review. The independent districts included a number of small and large city school systems.

In summary, the background data concerning school districts in New York State indicated that the survey had sampled a wide range of systems. This range spanned considerable differences in enrollment levels, demographic settings, annual budgets, and degrees of control over superintendent selection.

Background Information Concerning Superintendents

Data concerning the superintendents in New York State who responded to the survey are summarized in Tables 5-14 of the appendix. This information demonstrated that the leadership of the participating districts included a range of characteristics and degrees of experience.

The information concerning superintendent age levels indicated that, in New York State as well as the remainder of the nation, the profession is graying. The data in Table 5 demonstrated that almost 90 percent of participating superintendents were over 40 and that over one third were over age 50. The mean age for respondents was 48.76 years. These data assume added significance when it is recognized that many superintendents retire before age 60.[17] To a certain extent, these circumstances resulted from the fact that individuals do not become superintendents until their 40's or 50's. When coupled with the fact that many of these individuals retire early, these data demonstrate that the window for superintendent tenure is very narrow, perhaps 20 years.

Information concerning the qualifications of superintendents of schools in New York State demonstrated that these professionals have extensive education and experience. The data in Table 6 demonstrated that over 40 percent of the respondents have doctoral degrees, with most of these holding Ed.D.'s. A majority of all participants held doctorates or Certificates of Advanced Studies which include sixty hours of graduate study beyond the baccalaureate. The information in Table 7 demonstrated that a majority of the participants had completed their highest academic degree over 10 years ago. The mean year of completion of the highest academic degree was 1973. The data in Table 8 demonstrated that respondents had considerable experience in professional education, including administration, research, and teaching. More than 95 percent of the respondents had spent in excess of 15 years in professional education. The mean level of experience in professional experience among participants was almost 25 years.

Information collected in the survey tended to suggest that respondents were reaching the superintendency somewhat late in their careers. The data in Table 9 demonstrated that two-thirds of the participants had accumulated 10 years or less in superintendency, including all such positions held. These data also indicated that over one-quarter of the respondents had been superintendents for 11-20 years. The mean tenure of experience in superintendency was almost nine years. The data in Table 20 indicated that most participants had rather limited experience in their current positions. Slightly over half of the respondents had less than five years experience and over 80 percent had 10 or

fewer years in their present superintendencies. The mean length of tenure in current positions was almost six years.

The survey data also demonstrated that school superintendency in New York State is a male-dominated profession. The data in Table 11 indicate that almost 95 percent of school executives responding to the survey were male. It should be noted, however, that 10 years ago there were only two or three female superintendents in New York State. That number is beginning to increase.

Information collected in the survey also demonstrated that individuals become superintendents for a variety of reasons. The data in Table 12 indicated that, among survey participants, the potential for leadership, dedication to education, the opportunity to work with people, interest in management, and salary levels stimulated interest in the position. It was notable that leadership and dedication provided the most significant incentives, being named by more than 80 percent of those responding to the survey. It was also notable that salary and fringe benefit levels were the least significant incentives, being cited by only 54 and 21 percent of the participants respectively. Although other information suggests that many superintendents would change positions to increase their salaries before retirement, the results of this survey indicate that monetary considerations may not be as important as other aspects of these positions.

The study also provided information concerning the future plans of superintendents of schools. The data in Table 13 indicated that a slight majority of respondents were not considering job changes during the next five years, while about 40 percent were considering such changes. Consistent with the information concerning superintendent age levels discussed previously, the data in Table 14 demonstrated that a substantial number of current superintendents (approximately 32 percent) were considering retirement during the next five years.

The background data concerning superintendents collected through the survey includes reason for satisfaction. They demonstrated that the superintendents of schools in New York State are well educated, highly experienced, interested in leadership, and dedicated to education. However, these same data also give reason for concern for the profession. They indicated that after extensive careers in professional education, many superintendents are approaching retirement age and considering leaving the profession during the near future.

Selection Process for Current Positions

Data concerning the superintendent selection processes of school districts in New York State which responded to the survey are summarized in Tables 15-20 of the appendix. This information outlined the different structures included in these processes.

The survey data demonstrated that participating districts used different approaches to recruitment of superintendents. The information in Table 15 indicated that, in almost one-quarter of the responding school systems, the board of education did its own research and carried out the process itself. In over 45 percent of responding districts, the school board used the district superintendent or did its own research with the assistance of the district superintendent. The widespread use of district superintendents in the recruitment process was explained by the fact that approximately half of responding school systems were dependent districts, where this mechanism was mandatory. Private consultants were also employed in superintendent searches by slightly over 20 percent of responding districts. Only 9 of the responding systems made in-house selections without formal searches. Most of the 27 superintendents selected through "other" methods were recruited by boards of education with the assistance of outgoing superintendents.

The survey data also included information concerning the scope of processes by which school executives were selected. The information in Table 16 demonstrated the numbers of candidates for positions varied widely. Most school districts began their searches with at least 30 candidates,. The mean number of candidates was 62.18, probably a smaller pool than in the past. Among participating districts, the mean number of candidates was 62.18. By contrast, the data in Table 17 indicated that most responding districts actually interviewed fewer than 10 candidates. The mean number interviewed was between six and seven. The data in Table 18 also demonstrated that most districts conducted from one to three rounds of interviews, with about half using two rounds of interviews.

Information collected through the survey demonstrated that districts used a variety of methods to narrow lists of candidates for superintendents. The data in Table 19 demonstrated that over 40 percent of responding districts employed consultant screening and board review. Another 23 percent used board review only. Approximately 13 percent employed consultant screening only. In the remaining 21 percent of responding districts, other types of screening were employed.

The survey also produced information concerning the length of processes for selection of superintendents in local school districts. The data in Table 20 demonstrated that in over 70 percent of responding districts, the selection processes were carried out in

less than 3 months. In 48 percent of participating school systems, the selection activities were completed in less than 2 months. The mean length of a selection process was slightly less than 3 months. It has been suggested that 90-120 days are required to carry out the process in an effective manner.

The data concerning the actual processes of superintendent selection demonstrated that these activities were diverse. Large numbers of school boards decided to carry out this work themselves, while even larger numbers employed district superintendents or private entities as consultants. In almost all of the responding school districts, the selection process appeared to be carried out in an expeditious manner. Larger numbers of applicants were identified, rounds of interviews were conducted, and recruitment was completed within two to three months. It should be emphasized, however, that the survey did not evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the selection process.

Approaches to the Selection Process

Data concerning approaches to recruitment processes taken by superintendents of schools who responded to the survey are summarized in Tables 21-30 in the appendix. These data identified considerable variations in the experiences of individuals with these processes.

The survey collected information concerning reasons that participating superintendents changed jobs. The data in Table 21 reveals the major reason for changing positions, cited by over 40 percent of respondents was a desire for greater responsibilities. Interest in higher salaries and greater challenges were also cited by large numbers of superintendents. Less than 5 percent of respondents indicated that they changed jobs because of difficulties in previous positions, a surprisingly low proportion considering the level of turnover among superintendents. The data in Table 22 also indicated that a relatively smaller number of participants were unable to remain in previous positions. It should be noted, however, that difficulties in previous positions and their influences on job changes were not evaluated in detail through the survey.

Data gathered through the survey also included methods by which superintendents obtained information concerning their present positions. The data in Table 23 indicated that a variety of sources were employed. Among survey respondents, the largest single source of position information was position advertisements, used by almost half of who answered this item. Additional sources included other superintendents, internal district mechanisms, job search consultants, board members, other school professionals, and

university placement bureaus. It was notable that university placement bureaus were employed as sources by only 1-2 percent of respondents. The data in Table 24 demonstrated that over 80 percent of respondents obtained information concerning their current districts as part of their job searches. Approximately 56 percent of the participants carried out detailed background checks on prospective employers.

Information collected through the survey also focused on important elements within selection processes identified by current superintendents of schools who responded to the survey. The data in Table 25 demonstrated that a slight majority of these executives applied for more than one position in the job searches for their present positions. It was notable that over 45 percent of the survey participants (234 superintendents) applied for only one position in their job searches. Comments of practicing superintendents suggest that a larger proportion make more than one application in their job searches. The information in Table 26 indicated that responding superintendents used a variety of primary sources of assistance in pursuing their positions. District superintendents were the large single primary source, identified by approximately 25 percent of survey participants. Other important sources included board members, professional consultants, and combinations of district superintendents, board members, and professional consultants. Additional primary sources of assistance, which comprised the "other" category in Table 26, included superintendents, teachers, and members of local communities. The data in Table 27 demonstrated that responding superintendents also encountered a variety of obstacles in searches for their present positions. The most significant obstacles identified included board member and other administrators, who were cited by 19 and 17 percent of respondents respectively. A number of significant obstacles were not listed in the survey form and were assigned to the "other" category. These included difficulties with unions, experience in school administration outside New York State, and problems with outgoing superintendents. A few candidates cited female gender or lack of a doctorate as major obstacles. Almost 20 percent of respondents identified no major obstacles.

The survey data also focused on the roles of specific resources in the selection of superintendents of schools. The information in Table 28 demonstrated that professional associations did not exert a large impact on the process. More than 90 percent of survey participants indicated that these organizations played no role in their efforts to obtain current positions. Only about 8 percent of respondents indicated that professional associations contributed in some way to job searches for their current positions. The data

in Table 29 indicated that most survey participants viewed university training as a positive influence on their efforts to obtain present positions. Almost half of the respondents felt that such training contributed somewhat and approximately 21 percent felt that it played a large role. Slightly less than one-third of participants indicated that university training played no role in their job searches. The information in Table 30 demonstrated that survey participants were in general agreement that previous positions were the most useful aspects of their careers in obtaining current superintendencies. Over 72 percent (373) of the respondents identified previous positions alone as the principal contributors to their job searches. Another 16.73 percent of the participants indicated that combinations of previous positions, university training, participation in professional associations, and relationships with colleagues as the most useful aspects of their careers in obtaining present positions. It was notable that university training, participation in professional associations, and relationships with colleagues were each identified by no more than 6 percent of respondents as the most useful aspect of careers in obtaining current superintendencies.

Information collected in the survey also included data regarding conflicts encountered in job searches. Slightly over one-third (34.63 percent) of respondents indicated that important conflicts arose in their efforts to obtain current superintendencies. Many of these conflicts arose from family opposition to relocation. Others resulted from the reluctance of executives to leave previous positions. Still others arose from divisions and disagreements within new districts. A few of these conflicts were produced by consultants. One respondent suggested that the search consultants that he encountered ". . . (didn't) know what they were doing." Another reported that, because of a mix-up of applications by a consultant, he was scheduled for an interview in a district to which he did not apply.

The data concerning approaches to selection processes demonstrated that current superintendents in New York State encountered a considerable variety of experiences. Most of the respondents changed jobs because of a desire for greater challenges and responsibilities. Most obtained information for job searches from a number of sources and performed background checks concerning districts in which they were interested. A majority of respondents applied for more than one position. District superintendents, board members and professional consultants were the greatest sources of assistance in job searches. In cases where significant obstacles existed, they were frequently board members and other administrators. Previous experience was clearly the most important

source of assistance in obtaining current positions. For about a third of survey respondents, important conflicts in job searches arose from families, personal inertia, or problems in new school districts. This information suggested that, at the practical level, the selection of superintendents of schools could not be easily characterized. It involved the complex interaction of numerous individuals and organizations.

Attitudes Toward Selection Process

Data concerning the attitudes of responding superintendents concerning selection processes for their current positions are summarized in Tables 31-32 in the appendix. This information identified a considerable range of opinions toward the recruitment of school executives.

The data in Table 31 demonstrated that 96.75 percent of participating superintendents viewed their selection processes as fair. This was not unexpected since the respondents were successful candidates. On the statewide scale of this survey, it was not possible to sample opinions of unsuccessful candidates.

The data in Table 32 demonstrated that survey respondents held a variety of preferences concerning selection processes for school superintendents. The largest single group (approximately 33 percent of respondents) preferred to use district superintendents. Another 8.6 percent preferred district superintendents in combination with other mechanisms.

Reasons for Taking Positions

Information gathered in the survey also included reasons for taking current positions identified by responding superintendents. This information is summarized in Table 33 of the appendix. These data indicated that the survey participants identified a considerable range of reasons for taking their present superintendencies. The highest mean rank, on a scale of 1-7, was produced by "other" reasons not listed on the survey. Most of these reasons included attributes of the school system, such as the challenges of the new position, the reputation of the district, and the size of the district. After this category, respondents ranked locations of districts, and characteristics of boards of education next in importance. These were followed by salary, school staff, the financial status of districts, and fringe benefits.

Other Information

In addition to the specific information concerning the selection of school superintendents in New York State and related background information, the survey also collected written responses concerning aspects of these subjects that were not mentioned on the form. Through this approach, it gave participants the opportunity to discuss in detail those topics to which they attached particular importance. A total of 120 respondents, 23.3 percent of all participants, completed this portion of the study.

Responses to this question concerned a number of topics. Many of them focused on specific aspects of the selection process in New York State such as the role of the board of education, the role of consultants both in general and with respect to district superintendents and university consultants. The roles of other groups such as members of the community and teachers, internal searches, and other subjects.

Several respondents provided specific comments concerning the role of the board of education in superintendent selection. All 14 of these participants called for greater board activism in this process. One superintendent wrote, "Selection should be done by (the) Board of Education - This (is) (the) Board's most important function!". A number of respondents suggested that school boards should carry out detailed background checks concerning candidates for superintendencies. One respondent called for "networking" among boards to provide additional background information. A number of superintendents also called for greater planning by boards of education in recruitment activities, suggesting the need for development of specific purposes, job descriptions, and criteria for executive searches.

Many respondents offered written comments regarding the role of consultants in the selection of school superintendents. The activity of consultants was the major subject of the written comments provided, being addressed by 42 respondents. Almost all of the comments regarding this topic were negative.

Many participants were uneasy with the roles of all types of consultants in the selection of school superintendents. General comments on this subject included the following,

> "Consultants in my opinion are useless in the selection process."
>
> "The increasing role of consultants appears to be negatively affecting the process (of superintendent selection)."

> "I am very much opposed to the use of outside consultants as I feel they basically have their own stable of candidates and with few exceptions their candidates are made to fit a district's perceived needs."

> "I have a real problem with consultants, . . . in many cases, (they) are more concerned with placement of their students (or former students) than with a fair assessment of each candidate's credentials."

Some of the respondents described problems in search processes associated with consultants. As the above comments indicate, a number of superintendents criticized consultants for "pushing" their own associates as candidates. One respondent indicated that consultants make recruitment processes too cumbersome by conducting large numbers of interviews and develop "sophomoric" criteria such as written essays, loyalty oaths, and social reviews of spouses. Two participants indicated that they did not have the opportunity to meet many consultants and so were placed at a disadvantage in selection processes. One superintendent suggested that, as a result of these difficulties, the role of the consultant and, " . . . the organization and logic of the search, has diminished considerably."

Many of the negative comments concerning recruitment consultants were reserved for the specific purveyors of the art. A total of 15 respondents offered observations regarding the role of the district (BOCES) superintendent in the selection process. All but one of these were negative. A number of respondents felt that, as representatives of State government, district superintendents should not become involved in the recruitment process. One wrote that, "I see potential danger in searches by District Superintendents for their component districts." A few indicated that district superintendents might become involved at the specific request of local boards, but in passive capacities rather than in the screening of candidates and selection. Some respondents described problems in recruitment process generated by district superintendents. Examples of those comments follow.

> "(The) District Superintendent's role is (the) key to getting one's foot in the door. Once you have alienated yourself with the District Superintendent, one can forget about even getting an interview for another position."

"I honestly feel (that) some District Superintendents try to put their friends in positions and those that have any personal disagreements never get recommended."

A number of critical comments were also reserved for the use of university professors in the selection of school superintendents. A total of 11 respondents provided negative observations concerning this subject. Some participants were opposed to the use of university consultants in general, contending that this role should disqualify professors from participation in the recruitment process. Commenters on this subject frequently noted that university consultants tend to favor candidates from their own programs regardless of their qualifications. Examples of their observations follow.

"Consultants often have a "stable" that they give preference to."

"Some consultants will use only a stable of known candidates from their university."

"Some university consultants were too selective and should be blacklisted."

Additional specific comments focused on the roles of other groups, such as members of local communities and teachers, in the selection of superintendents of schools. Seven respondents indicated that their selection processes had benefited from the involvement of these groups. Some participants noted that interview and screening processes had been made more effective by greater community involvement.

It should be emphasized that, while many of the written comments regarding consultants were negative, they were provided by a minority of those responding to the survey. It appears that a large number of participants experienced positive relationships with consultants. Over three-fourths of respondents to the survey (385 superintendents) indicated that they preferred to use some type of consultant in the selection process (Table 32). It appears, however, that relatively few of these individuals provided written comments in the appropriate section of the survey form.

A number of survey participants also provided comments concerning internal searches. Twelve respondents noted that they had obtained positions after spending much or all of their careers within a single district. In some cases, a major factor in the recruitment of these individuals was the recommendation of the previous superintendent.

Other comments concerned a wide range of subjects. Some suggested that the development of defined criteria and a specific data base for the selection of superintendents would be useful. One suggested that the state professional association might develop such a mechanism. Two respondents were concerned that the costs of housing (defined by superintendent salaries) limited access to certain positions. Another indicated that many positions were not open to applicants aged 50 or above. Two participants emphasized the need for continuity, including the opinions of outgoing superintendents, in recruitment. Another suggested that the role of the spouse and family in this area would be useful to investigate.

The additional comments provided a wealth of information concerning the selection of superintendents of schools. These observations affirmed the role of the board of education, criticized the position of some consultants, and identified a number of subjects for further investigation.

Conclusions

The results of this study outlined in the previous section provided an overview of the process of selection of superintendents of schools in New York State. The 514 school districts that comprised this effort made it the largest single piece of research yet to be carried out concerning this subject.

The information collected in the survey demonstrated that school leadership in New York State currently includes superintendents who are dedicated to education and to their organizations. The data also suggested that the importance of superintendent selection will increase as large numbers of these professionals retire during the next five years.

Information gathered in the study also indicated that the current process of superintendent selection in New York State is a complex activity. The data showed that approaches of individual districts vary according to levels of consultant participation. Local boards of education have relied on various types of consultants, however, district superintendents and university professors have been most widely used. The data also indicated that candidates for school superintendencies have used a range of approaches in dealing with selection processes. Most practicing superintendents identified previous experience as the major influence on the success of their job searches. In this field, as in others, it appears that success begets success. Most also indicated that specific characteristics of their employing district were the major reason for accepting current positions.

The data gathered in the study also included a large amount of written comments regarding specific aspects of selection processes. Many respondents used these comments to provide specific insights and opinions that could not be addressed in detail by survey items.

The pattern of responses to the survey demonstrated that participating superintendents felt strongly that the local board of education should play an active role in the selection of school executives. The opinions of participants in the study reflected a consensus in the literature that the hiring of a superintendent of schools is the most important decision that a board of education can make.[18] It seems clear that this aspect of staff recruitment is very much different from all others, since it provides executive leadership and direction for a school district. Superintendent selection cannot be classified as just another personnel decision. In contrast to the hiring of teachers, or department directors, or even principals, it sets the tone for education in an entire school community.

The data collected through the survey indicated that in slightly less than one quarter of responding districts, boards of education performed their own searches for superintendents. In most participating districts, consultants including district superintendents, university professors, and private organizations and groups were employed in this process. In written comments gathered in the survey, a large number of respondents expressed their discontent with these circumstances. It should be noted that consultants make important contributions to many superintendent selection processes, for example, they have stimulated boards of education to provide salaries necessary to attract qualified candidates. While conceding the value of consultants, however, many survey participants called on boards of education to assume more active roles in the selection process. They suggested that, while some boards of education were employing consultants to perform specific technical functions that were beyond their own capabilities, many were allowing consultants to participate in the actual decision-making aspects of executive recruitment.

Results of this survey also suggested specific activities through which boards of education could take an active role in the selection of school superintendents. A number of respondents commented that boards should use executive recruitment as an opportunity to engage in systematic planning. Through this approach, boards with established planning processes could use vacancies in the office of superintendent as a tool for assessing their progress and needs, then recruit an executive who could address those needs. Through similar approaches, boards of education without formal planning mechanisms could use

superintendent vacancies as opportunities to create them, then use system-wide needs identified through planning as criteria for recruitment.

A number of participants in the study suggested that many boards of education approach superintendent selection in a haphazard manner, moving into the task without goals and objectives, or consigning most of the process to an outside consultant. A number of respondents who provided written comments made a strong case for the notion that, in a planning context, superintendent selection takes on the same sort of rigor for the board of education that it includes for candidates. Through this approach, school boards are forced to ask the question, "what do we want?", both from the new superintendent and from the district as a whole. Participants in the survey indicated that, through this type of process, a school district emerges from executive recruitment with a stronger sense of its goals, objectives, and needs, as well as with a new superintendent who will work to address those elements. If boards of education have difficulty with these types of activity, consultants can provide assistance. Board members must understand, however, that in the last analysis, they and not the consultants must make the decisions.

In addition to these points, a number of respondents to the survey indicated that activism by a board of education in executive recruitment tends to create greater continuity of leadership within a school district. Obviously, the development of maintenance of district-wide planning contributes to continuity of leadership and programming, as well as superintendent selection, however, the reasons for this relationship need to be understood by local boards of education. The board that assumes leadership in executive recruitment and becomes immersed in this activity acquires a thorough understanding of the needs of its new superintendent. It absorbs the specifics of individual capabilities. It grapples with the pragmatics of housing requirements and family needs. The board that participates actively in these concerns develops the beginnings of an effective relationship with its new partner. This same relationship will contribute to the quality of programming and assure executive continuity in a school community for long periods of time. Time invested by boards of education in this type of activity will be repaid in long periods of quality service by superintendents. Time avoided in this process will cause school boards to repeat executive searches every two or three years.

In their activities related to the selection of superintendents of schools, it is also important the members of boards of education focus on the breadth of their educational responsibilities, rather than on parochial interests. Board members who attempt to short

circuit selection processes by advancing a relative or close friend for a superintendency will not serve the educational interests of their communities.

In this context, it should be emphasized that responses to the survey did not preclude the role of consultants. It might be suggested that many of the negative comments regarding consulting that were expressed by participants were probably intended more for boards of education that abdicated their responsibilities in superintendent selection than for consultants who did the best that they could under the circumstances. Results of the survey clearly demonstrated that consultants are an established aspect of executive recruitment in many local school districts. A large number of respondents indicated that they preferred to have consultants involved in the selection process.

In this context, it should be emphasized that there are a large number of quality consultants who provide excellent services to local school districts in the selection of superintendents of schools. These individuals and organizations possess the technical skills necessary to help structure and support recruitment activities. These consultants generally do not become involved in actual decision-making activities.

The most important issue regarding the use of consultants concerned their roles, rather than the need for their presence. The written comments provided by respondents were overwhelmingly opposed to the selection of school superintendents by consultants, however, many conceded the need for involvement by consultants in technical aspects of the process. A number of participants indicated that boards of education frequently lack knowledge of procedures and guidelines for superintendent selection, suggesting that consultants could provide them with background information and ongoing advice regarding this area. Some respondents also noted that school boards sometimes prolong recruitment activities unnecessarily, indicating that consultants can keep these processes moving. Technical activities such as the provision of information concerning procedures and the maintenance of recruitment schedules appear to be appropriate concerns for consultants in the selection of school superintendents since they contribute to the process without impinging on decision-making by boards of education.

The importance of the results of the survey regarding consultants should not trouble the many effective professionals in this area who have contributed much to the quality of school leadership over the years. However, they suggest that, at least in New York State, legislation and regulations which require that district superintendents must recommend the selection of superintendents in dependent districts should be modified. Comments

regarding the need for board activism in executive recruitment indicated the need for this change. The survey also demonstrated that although approximately one-half of the respondents represented dependent districts, only 42 percent of the sample preferred district superintendents in executive recruitment. Because leadership by local boards of education is so important in superintendent selection, the school communities now classified as dependent districts must have the same rights that other localities enjoy. Boards of education in these communities must be able to select school superintendents without the need for review of their choices by district superintendents.

The results of the survey also identified a greater need for involvement in the selection of school superintendents by members of local communities and school staffs. Several respondents indicated that these groups had been useful in the development of guidelines for recruitment. They noted that members of local communities had offered fresh insights concerning leadership characteristics and that staff had identified important points regarding curricular matters. Every participant whose district had involved these groups indicated that such activity had benefited the recruitment process in a meaningful way. Some of the respondents noted that this type of process established worthwhile relationships with the successful candidate. In some cases, recruitment consultants have been helpful in developing these activities.

Information collected in the survey also indicated that boards of education should become more involved in the recruitment of superintendents of schools on a statewide basis. Some respondents suggested that school boards should participate directly in the contact of information regarding candidates through contacts with representatives of other school districts. One participant argued that boards of education should develop networks for executive recruitment through which they could share detailed information regarding candidates. Other respondents indicated that school boards should develop procedures through which their members could make direct contacts with members of other boards and local communities in order to identify candidates for superintendencies and evaluate applicants for positions. Apart from the need for leadership by boards of education in executive recruitment, this type of detailed information gathering is extremely necessary. It brings individuals who will make the selection directly into contact with important information concerning the candidates they will evaluate. In order for boards of education to make informed choices, this contact must occur without interference by third parties. Effective consultants, with knowledge of school districts in other areas, have been useful in arranging these contacts.

Apart from their implications for the process of superintendent selection, the results of the study also suggested important conclusions regarding the training of educational leaders. Information gathered in the study demonstrated that, while university training was necessary, previous experience was the single most important influence on recruitment. It should be noted that university training was probably necessary to obtain experience in educational administration. It might also be questioned whether, in the absence of such training, that experience would have been successful. However, this pattern of responses suggested that current university programs in educational administration may not be providing the training in practical aspects of school leadership or the related skills that are necessary for effective superintendency. It must be conceded that a certain amount of executive savvy must be obtained on the job, however, the patterns of responses to this survey suggested that training programs for superintendents should place greater emphasis on internships that offer experience in practical leadership. The data also implied that more time in the classroom should be devoted to practical aspects of superintendency through case studies and other mechanisms. Increasingly, it has become apparent that educational leaders require proficiency in communications, legal, and interpretive skills, as well as the curriculum development and related concerns. In many instances, university schools of education might allow training in these areas to be provided by other schools and departments. Future superintendents should benefit from the training offered by higher education programs in communications, law, business, and other areas.

Information gathered in the survey also suggested numerous areas related to executive recruitment that deserve further investigation. Respondents identified a wide variety of conflicts in job searches, many of which involved families. One participant suggested the need for more information concerning the relationship between family influences and educational leadership. The impact of outgoing superintendents on the selection process is a point that was noted in responses to survey items and in written comments. Its parameters deserve to be defined.

The results of this survey of the selection of superintendents of schools in New York State provided a useful overview of this process and the environment in which it occurs. They offered no easy formulas for the recruitment of effective administrators, however, they contained some notable guidelines for those boards of education that are willing to make the effort. The information collected in the survey demonstrated that, while the selection of school superintendents is a diverse and complicated endeavor, it is one which

requires extensive dedication and effort by the local board. Although their specific responses varied, participants clearly indicated that boards will benefit from this activity only to the extent that they invest in it. It was Daniel E. Griffith who concluded that there is no shortage of qualified administrators, only a shortage of gifted administrators. In these circumstances, the school communities lucky enough to employ gifted superintendents will be the ones with boards of education dedicated and patient enough to find them.

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Table 1

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOL DISTRICT
1988

Enrollment of School District	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Less Than 500	64	12.60
501 - 1000	96	18.90
1001 - 1500	106	20.87
1501 - 2500	101	19.88
2501 - 3500	54	10.63
3501 - 5000	43	8.46
5001 - 7500	24	4.72
7501 - 10000	14	2.76
More Than 10000	6	1.18
Total	508	100.00
Mean Enrollment	2,613.90	

Table 2

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE DEMOGRAPHICS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT 1988

Demographics of School District	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Urban	14	2.76
Small City	36	7.10
Suburban	171	33.73
Rural	286	56.41
Total	507	100.00

Table 3

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET
1988

School District Budget	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Less Than $1,000,000	3	0.60
$1 M to Less Than $2 M	20	4.03
$2 M to Less Than $4 M	75	15.12
$4 M to Less Than $6 M	59	11.90
$6 M to Less Than $10 M	123	24.80
$10 M to Less Than $15 M	68	13.71
$15 M to Less Than $20 M	38	7.66
$20 M to Less Than $25 M	25	5.04
$25 M to $50 M	64	12.90
More Than $50 M	21	4.23
Total	496	99.99
Mean Budget	$14,769,131.97	

Table 4

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE STATUS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT 1988

Status of School District	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Independent District	252	50.20
Dependent District	250	49.80
Total	502	100.00

Table 5

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
AGE OF SUPERINTENDENT
1988

Age of Superintendent	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Less Than 30	0	0.00
30 to 35	2	0.39
36 to 40	59	11.57
41 to 45	136	26.67
46 to 50	131	25.69
51 to 55	122	23.92
56 to 65	56	10.98
More Than 65	4	0.78
Total	510	100.00
Mean Age	48.76	

Table 6

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE HIGHEST DEGREE OF EDUCATION 1988

Highest Degree of Education	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Bachelors	2	0.39
Masters	208	40.78
Ed.D.	154	30.20
Ph.D.	64	12.55
Certificate of Advanced Studies	72	14.12
Other	10	1.96
Total	510	100.00

Table 7

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE YEAR OF HIGHEST DEGREE 1988

Year of Highest Degree	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Before 1960	23	4.91
1960 to 1965	69	14.74
1966 to 1970	59	12.61
1971 to 1975	132	28.21
1976 to 1980	110	23.50
1981 to 1985	47	10.04
After 1985	28	5.98
Total	468	99.99
Mean Year	1973	

Table 8

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE TOTAL YEARS IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION 1988

Total Years in Professional Education	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Less Than 5	0	0.00
5 to 10	1	0.19
11 to 15	23	4.48
16 to 20	117	22.81
21 to 25	144	28.07
26 to 30	126	24.56
31 to 35	82	15.98
More Than 35	20	3.90
Total	513	99.99
Mean	24.84	

Table 9

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
TOTAL YEARS IN SUPERINTENDENCY
1988

Total Years in Superintendency	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Less Than 5	162	31.64
5 to 10	182	35.55
11 to 15	81	15.82
16 to 20	58	11.33
21 to 25	23	4.49
26 to 30	6	1.17
31 to 35	0	0.00
More Than 35	0	0.00
Total	512	100.00
Mean	8.74	

Table 10

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE YEARS IN PRESENT SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY 1988

Years in Present School Superintendency	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Less Than 5	261	51.28
5 to 10	161	31.63
11 to 15	54	10.61
16 to 20	27	5.30
21 to 25	6	1.18
26 to 30	0	0.00
31 to 35	0	0.00
More Than 35	0	0.00
Total	509	100.00
Mean	5.91	

Table 11

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
SEX OF SUPERINTENDENT
1988

Sex of Superintendent	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Male	485	94.91
Female	26	5.09
Total	511	100.00

Table 12

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
REASONS FOR BECOMING SUPERINTENDENT
1988

Reasons for Becoming Superintendent	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Dedicated to Human Education	413	19.96
Leadership Role	488	23.59
Interested in Management	353	17.06
Enjoy Working With People	367	17.74
Salary Attractive	280	13.53
Fringe Benefits Attractive	112	5.41
Other	56	2.71

Table 13

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
SUPERINTENDENTS CONSIDERING
ADDITIONAL JOB CHANGES
1988

Superintendents Considering Additional Job Changes	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Considering Changes	205	41.41
Not Considering Changes	290	58.59
Total	495	100.00

Table 14

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
SUPERINTENDENTS CONSIDERING RETIREMENT
1988

Superintendents Considering Retirement	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Considering Retirement	161	31.88
Not Considering Retirement	344	68.12
Total	505	100.00

Table 15

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
METHOD OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENT
1988

Method of Selection	Districts Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Board Did Own Research	118	23.00
Placement Services Used	19	3.70
District Superintendent Used	199	38.79
Private Consultants Used	108	21.05
Board Did Own Research and District Superintendent Used	33	6.43
No Search/In-House Selection	9	1.75
Other	27	5.26
Total	513	99.98

Table 16

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES FOR THE POSITION 1988

Total Number of Candidates for the Position	Districts Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
1	31	7.64
2 to 5	16	3.94
6 to 10	8	1.97
11 to 20	18	4.43
21 to 30	24	5.91
31 to 50	110	27.09
51 to 75	75	18.47
76 to 100	70	17.24
More Than 100	54	13.30
Total	406	99.99
Mean Number	62.18	

Table 17

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES INTERVIEWED
1988

Total Number of Candidates Interviewed	Districts Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
1	46	9.98
2 to 5	129	27.98
6 to 10	243	52.71
11 to 20	40	8.68
21 to 30	2	0.43
31 to 50	1	0.22
51 to 75	0	0.00
76 to 100	0	0.00
More Than 100	0	0.00
Total	461	100.00
Mean Number	6.47	

Table 18

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
NUMBER OF ROUNDS OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED
1988

Number of Rounds of Interviews Conducted	Districts Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
1	93	19.42
2	239	49.90
3	130	27.14
4	9	1.88
5	5	1.04
6 or More	3	0.63
Total	479	100.01
Mean Number	2.17	

Table 19

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
TECHNIQUES FOR NARROWING LISTS OF CANDIDATES
1988

Techniques for Narrowing Lists of Candidates	Districts Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Consultant Screening Only	61	12.95
Board Review Only	110	23.35
Both Consultant Screening & Board Review	201	42.68
Other	99	21.02
Total	471	100.0

Table 20

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE LENGTH OF SELECTION PROCESS 1988

Length of Selection Process	Districts Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Less Than 1 Month	91	19.08
More Than 1 Month to Less Than 2 Months	139	29.14
More Than 2 Months to Less Than 3 Months	122	25.58
More Than 3 Months to Less Than 4 Months	62	13.00
More Than 4 Months to Less Than 5 Months	18	3.77
More Than 5 Months to Less Than 6 Months	28	5.87
More Than 6 Months	17	3.56
Total	477	100.00
Mean Number	2.89	

Table 21

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
REASONS FOR CHANGING JOBS
1988

Reasons for Changing Jobs	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Desire Greater Responsibilities	374	40.13
Desire High Salary	266	28.54
Difficulties in Previous Position	41	4.40
Lack of Challenge in Past Position	114	12.23
Other	137	14.70

Table 22

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
ABILITY TO REMAIN IN PRESENT POSITION
1988

Ability to Remain in Present Position	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Yes	490	95.52
No	23	4.48
Total	513	100.00

Table 23

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE SOURCES OF INFORMATION CONCERNING SUPERINTENDENT VACANCY 1988

Sources of Information Concerning Superintendent Vacancy	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Conversations With Superintendents	90	15.36
Conversations With Other School Professionals	27	4.61
Conversations With Board Members	52	8.87
Position Advertisements	265	45.22
Contacts With Job Search Consultant	60	10.24
University/College Placement Bureau	8	1.37
Internal	78	13.31
Other	6	1.02

Table 24

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE COMPLETION OF BACKGROUND CHECK ON SCHOOL DISTRICT 1988

Level of Investigation by Superintendent	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Detailed Background Check	262	55.98
Obtained Some Information	155	33.12
No Background Check	51	10.90
Total	468	100.00

Table 25

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
APPLICATION FOR OTHER SUPERINTENDENCY
1988

Superintendent Applying for Other Superintendency	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Applied	280	54.47
Did Not Apply	234	45.53
Total	514	100.00

Table 26

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
LARGEST SOURCE OF ASSISTANCE
IN JOB SEARCH
1988

Largest Source of Assistance In Job Search	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Professional Colleagues	69	13.64
Professional Associations	2	0.40
Board Members	82	16.21
University Consultants	38	7.51
District Superintendent	127	25.10
Other Consultants	27	5.34
Combinations of the Above	89	17.59
Other	72	14.23
Total	506	100.02

Table 27

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
MOST SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES
IN JOB SEARCH
1988

Most Significant Obstacles In Job Search	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Other Administrators	48	17.27
Board Members	54	19.42
Members of Community	9	3.24
University Consultants	8	2.88
District Superintendent	10	3.60
Other Consultants	7	2.52
Combinations of the Above	10	3.60
None	55	19.78
Other	77	27.70
Total	278	100.01

Table 28

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION
IN OBTAINING POSITION
1988

Role of Professional Association in Obtaining Position	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Large Role	2	0.39
Contributed Somewhat	43	8.37
No Role	469	91.25
Total	514	100.01

Table 29

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
ROLE OF UNIVERSITY TRAINING
IN OBTAINING POSITION
1988

Role of University Training in Obtaining Position	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Large Role	108	21.05
Contributed Somewhat	253	49.32
No Role	152	29.63
Total	513	100.00

Table 30

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
MOST USEFUL ASPECT
IN OBTAINING POSITION
1988

Most Useful Aspect in Obtaining Position	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
University Training	19	3.70
Previous Positions	373	72.57
Participation in Professional Associations	0	0.00
Relationships with Colleagues	30	5.84
Combination of the Above	86	16.73
Other	6	1.17
Total	514	100.01

Table 31

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
FAIRNESS OF SELECTION PROCESS
1988

Fairness of Selection Process	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
Fair	476	96.75
Not Fair	16	3.25
Total	492	100.00

Table 32

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
PREFERENCE REGARDING TYPE OF PROCESS
FOR SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENT
1988

Preference Regarding Type of Process for Selection of Superintendent	Superintendents Responding	
	Number	Percent of Total
School Boards Do Own Searches	106	20.78
Use University Placement Services	17	3.33
Use District Superintendents	168	32.94
Use Consultants	98	19.22
School Boards Do Own Searches and Use District Superintendents	28	5.49
Use University Placement Services and Use District Superintendents	7	1.37
School Boards Do Own Searches with Combinations (General)	51	10.00
Use University Placement Services with Consultants	7	1.37
Use District Superintendents with Consultants	9	1.76
Other	19	3.73
Total	510	99.99

Table 33

SURVEY OF SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS
IN NEW YORK STATE
REASONS FOR TAKING POSITION
1988

Reasons for Taking Position	Superintendents Responding Mean Rank (1-7)
Location of District	2.33
Board of Education	2.68
Financial Status of District	4.47
School Staff	3.62
Salary	3.39
Fringe Benefits	4.84
Other (Challenge of Position, Reputation (Academic Quality, Program) of District, Size of District, Familiarity with District, Desire to be Superintendent)	1.49